Little Locals

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Bakewell, of Gary, Ind., are visiting relatives and friends here.

Mr. S. L. Palmbaum is in Baltimore on a business trip.

Money to Loan—Money to lend in any amount on Farm Land.
BLACKBURN SMITH.

Mr. Roger Shepherd, son of the late Rev. T. B. Shepherd and brother of Mr. Norman Shepherd, of Rockland neighborhood, who is now practising law in tne hustling city of Huntington, W. Va., was in this section during the holidays, visiting relatives and friends.

Miss Rothchild, of Baltimore, who has been visiting Mrs. S. L. Palmbaum, has returned home.

Mrs Charles McGuire and little son have returned to Hoboken, N. J., after spending the holidays with relatives here.

Miss Nannie Moss Taylor is visiting friends in New York.

Mr. D. C. Snyder is at home again, after spending the holidays with his daughter, Mrs. McVeigh, in Baltimore.

Shipping veal calves, fat sheep, fat hogs and cattle, at the N. & W. Stock Yards Monday, Jan. 18. Send postal of what you have to sell to A. D. Hardesty, Berryville, Va., or to myself at Charles Town, W. Va. G. F. WALL.

Miss Georgia L. Baldwin, of near Berryville, is visiting at the home of Mr. G. F. Wall, of Charles Town.

Two loads of stock steers for sale at Charles Town, about 800 pounds average. G. F. WALL.

Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Hook and daughter, of Clarke County, have returned from a visit to Mrs. Hook's father, Mr. Martin S[illegible], one of the leading citizens of [illegible] county.

Money [illegible] 1,000 [illegible]

[illegible] Attorney,
Boyce, Va.

Confederate Ladies Meet Tomorrow

The Daughters of the Confederacy will meet at the residence of Mrs. R. P. Page on Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

M. H. KERFOOT,
Secretary.

The Poll Tax in Virginia.

By the terms of the Virginia constitution no person can vote in that State unless he has personally paid a poll tax of $1.50 a year, six months prior to the election, for three years continuously. This limitation upon the right of suffrage, originally intended to exclude the corrupt negro vote, has had the effect of so greatly reducing the white vote that an agitation has sprung up, led by several of the more independent newspapers, for a repeal of the poll-tax provision or its amendment so as to provide that payment of the poll tax thirty days before election may qualify the elector. The Norfolk Landmark is the most conspicuous critic of the poll tax. It declares that under the present system it is "not possible to obtain at the polls a true verdict of the general public. The more the electorate is restricted by cunning and complicated devices, the greater is the power of the ward heeler and the boss." It asserts that the restriction of the electorate has "resulted almost in political atrophy," and that if the Democracy of Virginia refuses to correct this condition "it will be eventually overwhelmed in a tidal wave of public wrath."

Not only does the poll tax operate to disfranchise many excellent citizens, for the difficulty of getting good citizens to vote, always great, is admittedly accentuated by the poll-tax requirement, but it has brought about wholesale corruption of voters through the prepayment of their poll taxes by party bosses and machines. The prepayment of poll taxes has been reduced to a system by both Republican and Democratic party managers, and of course such prepayment operates to pledge the voter to support the candidate responsible for the gratuity. This corruption of voters is as effective in the primaries as in the regular elections, since the qualifications for voting are the same in each. How the poll tax works in practice is thus described by the Lynchburg News, a paper which thinks the evils of the existing system could be avoided by allowing the payment of the tax thirty days before election:

"Observation of the application of the six months' prepayment condition has convinced us that bribery through payment of poll tax is more effective in net results under a long time limit than would otherwise be the case. This for the reason that the venal voter has some one to be careful and watchful for him in the preservation of his suffrage status. Shrewd Republican managers make this a business whenever the field is closly contested. In the Ninth district, for example, the practice on the part of the Republicans has developed into a systematic, well-ordered, carefully designed, and consistently prosecuted feature of campaign management. Upon the other hand, worthy citizens by the hundreds forget. They are not especially interested in politics six months prior to the election. Things must warm up a bit and the fight be on in earnest before they wake to a realization of their duty and an earnest desire to qualify for suffrage. Thus the man who permits his poll tax to be paid for him has a "say" at the ballot box which is rendered the more effective and controlling in the degree that others who are able and willing to pay their own poll taxes, and would do so were the six months' qualification materially modified, neglect to observe existing prerequisities."

The News cites a Republican example of the manipulation of the poll-tax requirement, but the evil is not confined to the Ninth district by any means. Our information is that Democratic machines in Norfolk and elsewhere have systemized the corruption of voters through prepayment of poll taxes quite as effectively as the Republican managers, and that in consequence of this corruption the control of elections has fallen completely into the hands of small coteries of politicians, who hold the balance of power by means of their paid and bribed retainers. It is a situation calling loudly for remedy. Widespread corruption of voters, the atrophy of the electorate, the elimination of many good citizens from influence in the elections, and the supply to bosses of a convenient tool for political manipulation is manifestly much too high a price to pay for the disfranchisement of a few negro voters.—Washington Herald.

CONFEDERATE FLAGS.

The Stars and Bars and Then the Red Battleflag.

The first Confederate flag was the stars and bars, a blue field and three stripes, one white and two red, and on the blue field seven white stars in a circle, a star for each state that up to that time had seceded. In battle, however, it was seen that this banner bore altogether too close a resemblance to the stars and stripes, and thus there came into use the Confederate battleflag, the origin of which seems to have been as follows:

This is the statement of General William L. Cabell: "When the Confederate army commanded by General Beauregard and the Federal army confronted each other at Manassas, it was seen that the Confederate flag and the stars and stripes looked at a distance so much alike that it was hard to distinguish one from the other. General Beauregard, thinking that serious mistakes might be made in recognizing our troops, after the battle of July 18, at Blackburn Ford, ordered that a small badge should be worn on the left shoulder by our troops and, as I was chief quartermaster, ordered me to purchase a large amount of red flannel and to distribute it to each regiment."

This Confederate battleflag was adopted in September, 1861, and was designed by Generals Johnston and Beauregard. Red was its color, with a blue St. Andrew's cross reaching from corner to corner and white stars on the cross representing the different southern states. The women of the south made these flags by hundreds out of their red and blue silk dresses. Miss Constance Cary, who afterward became Mrs. Burton Harrison, the well known novelist, was one of the three southern girls who made the first three battleflags.—Magazine of American History.

Called Him In Writing.

A tourist in an out of the way region of England put up one night at an amiable old lady's cottage, the village inn being full. Now, the tourist was very deaf, which fact he took pains to impress upon the old lady, together with instructions to wake him at a particular hour in the morning. On waking a good deal later than the time appointed he found that the amiable old lady, with commendable regard for propriety, had slipped under his door a slip of paper on which was written:

"Sir, it is half past 8!"—Harper's Weekly.

Her Husband's Business.

"Now, madam," said the gas man with the gray curl in the middle of his forehead after he had asked her twenty questions more or less apropos of her application for the privilege of paying for gas, "what is your husband's business? What is he doing now?"

"I can't be sure, of course," the woman replied, "but I have my suspicions. I had to divorce him before he fled."—New York Press.

A Stinging Retort.

Was Beal (proudly)—I am going in a necklace which I am assured cannot be told from real pearls. Brass Ring (sarcastically)—Aw, they're stringing you.—Baltimore American.

Home Course In Modern Agriculture

I.—How a Seed Starts to Grow

By C. V. GREGORY,
Agricultural Division, Iowa State College

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A SEED is a simple thing to look at. It might as well be a pebble or a grain of sand for all there seems to be to it. Only a bean, you say, yet there's a great deal more to that bean than you ever dreamed of.

Take a bean—just an ordinary white bean out of the pantry—and look at it. The smooth white outer covering is the seed coat. It is almost water tight and is a protection for the parts that lie within. On one side you will notice a very conspicuous spot. This is the seed scar and is the place where the little stem that fastened the bean to the pod was attached. Near one end of the seed scar, or hilum, as the botanists call it, is a small round hole, the micropyle. If you put a bean in water it will soon begin to swell because of the water which it absorbs through the micropyle.

Now, take a bean that has been soaked for a few hours. The seed coat will come off easily. The part of the bean that is inside is found to be split in two lengthwise. These two halves are called cotyledons, which is only another name for seed leaves. Spread the cotyledons apart carefully. If you look closely you can see a little plant tucked snugly away between them. Just to one side of the middle is a small stem, the caulicle. Fastened to it is the plumule, a tiny bunch of leaves so small that you may have difficulty in making them out. Farther on, at the end of the bean, is the stubby root, or radicle. These different parts are found in every seed, no matter how small.

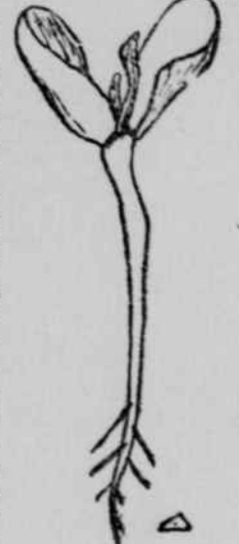

FIG. I—A LITTLE BEAN PLANT.

Now that you have seen what is in the bean, examine a pumpkin seed in the same way. It is much the same inside as the bean, only flatter. The hilum is at the pointed end, and the plumule is so small that you may not be able to see it at all. In these two seeds there are only two main parts, the seed coat and the little plant. By far the greater part of the room inside the seed coat is taken up by the fleshy seed leaves.

Now let us look at a different kind of a seed. Take a kernel of corn that has been soaked for several hours and cut it in two lengthwise the narrow way. The back of the grain is made up in part of a hard, flinty substance and in part of a white, mealy layer. A large part of the front of the kernel is taken up by the soft, oily germ.

Look at the cut section of the germ carefully. The little plant can be made out very plainly. The little pointed stem which points upward and outward is the cotyledon. There is only one cotyledon in corn instead of two, as in the other seeds you have examined. If you will take a cotyledon of a corn [plant] that has been left in a warm pla[ce] until it has commenced to grow and cut it in two lengthwise you will see that the inside is packed with layers of tiny leaves ready to unfold as soon as their turn comes. This is the plumule. The other parts of the little corn plant you will be able to make out with little trouble.

You have doubtless been wondering what the rest of the kernel, the part back of the germ, is for. While it is not a part of the plant itself, it is of very great use to it, as we shall see. The little plant when it begins to grow must have food. At first it has no roots to get this food from the soil, so it must get its nourishment from some other source. This source is the part of the kernel outside of the germ itself, or the endosperm. In the pumpkin seed and the bean the endosperm and the cotyledons are the same—that is, the food material is stored in the large, fishy seed leaves.

This food material consists largely of starch and oil. Neither of these can be used by the developing plant without first being changed to a liquid form. This is one of the reasons why seeds will not germinate without water. The other reason is that the water is needed to soften the seed coat so the plant can get out. But this starch and oil will not dissolve in water without first being changed to a soluble form. This is accomplished by means of ferments called enzymes. If you will put a piece of starch on your tongue for a moment you will find that it will begin to taste sweet. This is because the ferments in the saliva are changing it to sugar. The enzymes in the endosperm work in much the same way, changing the starch and oil to sugar and other soluble substances. These are dissolved by the water and go to feed the growing plant.

These enzymes cannot work without air and warmth. You already know that a seed will not germinate in cold ground, and if you will put some beans in a glass of water and leave them for several days you will find that they will not germinate, no matter how warm they are kept, because they cannot get air. The reason is that without both air and warmth the enzymes cannot prepare the food for the plant, and if it cannot get food of course it cannot grow.

After the plant has started to grow the seed coat is no longer of any use to it. In some plants, such as corn, the little plant finds its way out very easily. The little pumpkin plant, with its heavy coat, has a harder time. Indeed, were it not for a little contrivance with which nature has provided it it could not get out at all. This is a tiny hook on the lower end of the seed. This hook catches on the end of the seed coat and peels it back as neatly as you take off your coat. Watch for this in a germinating pumpkin or squash seed and see if you cannot notice it. In some seeds, like hickory nuts, the plant is unable to get out until the seed coat is cracked by the frost or in some other way.

We have seen that a seed cannot start to grow unless it has moisture, warmth and air. It not only needs these, but it needs them in the proper proportions. In a light, sandy soil moisture is often lacking, and the seed is slow in germinating for this reason. In such a soil growth will start more quickly if the soil is packed tightly around the seed. The seed will soak up moisture more rapidly if the particles of soil are in close contact with it on all sides. Packing down the soil in the row with the flat side of a hoe or with a board or with the broad, flat planter wheels in the field helps the seed to absorb moisture and so hastens germination.

In a heavy, sticky clay soil there is usually plenty of moisture, but air is often lacking. If such a soil is packed down too tightly over the seed the particles are forced so closely together that very little air can get through, and hence germination is delayed. In a soil of this kind seeds should never be planted very deeply.

The most important factor of all is warmth. A cold soil may have moisture and air in exactly the right amounts, and still the seed will not start to develop. Even if it does begin to grow progress will be slow, and the plant will have a weak, unhealthy look. It is of the utmost importance to wait until the seed bed is warm before planting the seed. Many seeds which would rot or produce only spindling stalks if planted in a cold soil will grow into strong plants if planting is delayed until the soil has become warm. Any seed will make a stronger, better producing plant if it has a warm seed bed to start from.

The rapidity with which soil will warm up in the spring depends a great deal upon the nature of the soil itself. A sandy soil warms up quickly because the air can get down into it easily, thus warming it all the way through at once. Another reason for the higher temperature of sandy soil is its greater dryness. As long as water is evaporating rapidly the ground will be cold. The process of evaporation requires a great deal of heat.

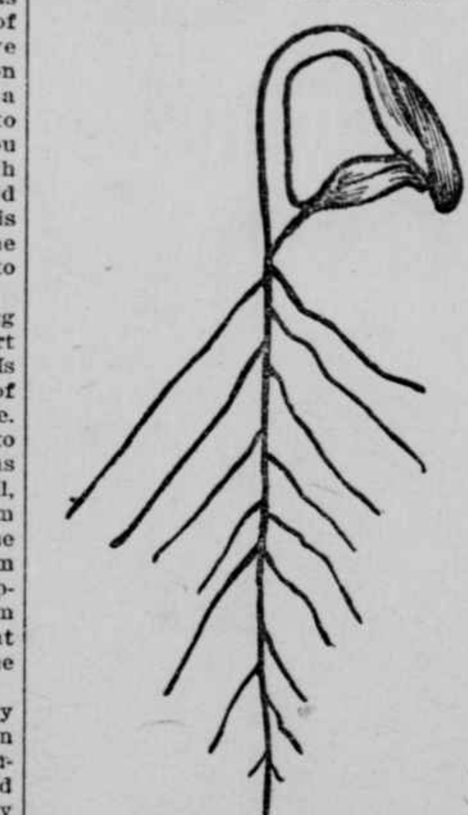

FIG. II—HOW A SQUASH PLANT TAKES OFF ITS SEED COAT.

We can help the soil to become warm in the spring, then, by doing all that we can to check evaporation. Did you ever notice how quickly the surface of a wet field became dry after it had been harrowed? This is because stirring and loosening the soil stops the water from coming up from below. The water in the loose upper layer soon evaporates, and after that the heat is used in warming the soil instead of turning the water into vapor. Of course if we are not going to allow the surplus water to be given off by evaporation we must provide tile drains and ditches to carry it away. We shall study more about drainage and the movement of water through the soil in another article.